



January 11, 2013

The Honorable John Kitzhaber
Governor of Oregon
Salem, Oregon 97301

Dear Governor Kitzhaber:

It was a pleasure to speak with you and Washington Governor Gregoire about the Columbia River Crossing (CRC) project during our conference call on January 2, 2013. As a follow up, we write to highlight the progress our departments are making to keep this important project moving forward. We also wish to underscore the need for you to work closely with your State legislature to secure local financial commitments this year so that the CRC project may proceed toward a Full Funding Grant Agreement in 2014, without incurring additional and costly delays.

Ensuring the success of this complex, multimodal project is a high priority for the Obama Administration. We recognize that a new and enhanced crossing over the Columbia River will deliver a long-term, comprehensive solution to improve safety, relieve highway and freight congestion throughout the region, and make a long-sought rail transit link between Portland and Vancouver possible while continuing to meet the reasonable needs of river navigation.

In August 2012, President Obama selected the CRC as one of only seven surface or multimodal transportation projects to be expedited as part of the Administration's "We Can't Wait" Initiative. This significant vote of confidence for the project has cleared the way for faster infrastructure permitting and review processes while creating near-term opportunities for many well-paying project-related jobs in Oregon.

We are very encouraged by the progress that has been made on the project in recent months. The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) provided the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) with the navigation impact report. Additionally, FTA and FHWA completed a National Environmental Policy Act re-evaluation, and the Coast Guard concurred that we should move forward with the next step and the submittal of a bridge permit application. The decision to propose raising the height of the bridge from 95 feet to 116 feet marked an important milestone to minimize any commercial hindrances that the project may have posed, as it reduces the number of affected waterway users from 54 to 7 or fewer. As discussed on our call, the leadership of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and USCG will continue to do everything possible to ensure a timely review and response to the CRC's complete permit application, once it is submitted.

The Honorable John Kitzhaber
Page 2

As these efforts suggest, both the U.S. Department of Transportation and DHS are doing everything possible to keep the project on track.

In order to stay on schedule and minimize any inflationary cost growth that may arise from further delays, the State of Washington and the State of Oregon must submit to FTA a final joint CRC financing plan supported by both legislatures no later than October 2013. This plan should demonstrate the commitment of all non-New Starts capital and operating funds for the project, including documentation of bridge toll rates adequate to meet revenue projections. The submission of this plan during this calendar year will satisfy a critical deadline for ensuring that the project meets the expected construction schedule and is included in the President's future budget requests.


Building a modern, efficient Columbia River Crossing is vitally important to the future of both Oregon and Washington State. This project will not only enhance the free flow of commerce throughout the region, while minimizing the impacts to waterway users, but also promises to touch the lives of millions of motorists, transit riders, bicyclists, and pedestrians who live and work in greater Portland and Vancouver.

We stand ready to assist you in driving this project toward a funding agreement, while encouraging you to adhere to a timeframe that keeps this regionally significant transportation project on budget and on course. A separate, identical letter has been provided to Governor Gregoire.

Sincerely yours,



Ray LaHood
Secretary of Transportation



Janet Napolitano
Secretary of Homeland Security